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Trump's Shocking Curvatures, by Alastair Crooke - The Unz Review

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"This is Putin and Trump's world now".

Trump and his team have been busy dismantling – and exposing to public view – the mechanism to the all-encompassing narrative control machine which has been shown to be both authoritarian and industrial in its global scope.

The Musk investigations have begun to peer into the USAID complex. They reveal a system that Musk and President Trump postulate, is one fully designed to generate fraud.

The big picture however is not that USAID has been a sub-silo for CIA; that is not revelatory. What is revealing, however, is the evidence that USAID was so heavily involved in domestic influence operations. This latter aspect serves to highlight USAID's relationship with the CIA and the fact that CIA, FBI, Dept. of Homeland Security and USAID were one big Intelligence

Community structure, held together (in flimsy legal terms) by the Office of Director of National Intelligence (the role that Tulsi Gabbard will fill now she has been confirmed in post).

Trump's insistence on Gabbard for the post reflects his absolute need for Intelligence 'truth'; but it is also likely that the DNI will become the locus for unscrambling and revealing the shadow 'Intelligence Control Machine' that is twin to the narrative manipulation complex.

Likely more revelations will follow, as part to a carefully managed release of further exposés – adding to the atmosphere of a breathless hurtling towards a new era. And keeping the opposition off-balance.

The Spectator magazine correctly observes that the head-spinning acceleration towards a new era is not confined to America, Canada, Greenland and Panama: "There is a wind of change blowing through the West. It emanates from Washington DC", Gavin Mortimer writes.

A number of EU leaders congregated last weekend at a 'Patriots for Europe' (PfE) summit in Madrid. Geert Wilders declared:

> "We are living in an historic age, and my message to all the old leaders from Macron to Scholz, to your own

> Pedro Sánchez?: It's time. It's over now. They are history".

Viktor Orbán said:

> "The Trump tornado has changed the world in just a few weeks … Yesterday we were heretics, today we're mainstream".

Marine Le Pen claimed that the West is *"facing a truly global turning point … Meanwhile, the European Union seems to be in a state of shock … [in the consensus Brussels view however], Trump isn't an inspiring figure – but an antagonizing one".*

Nonetheless, in the U.S., the first CBS-YouGov snapshot poll shows what public sentiment thinks of Trump: 69% see him as tough; 63% as energetic; 60 % as focussed, and 58% as effective. His overall job rating stands at 53%. Just how Trump would like his image to be, we imagine.

Trump's 'showman' image and 'shock psycho-therapy' clearly works for domestic America. In the world beyond, it is another story. There they have only Trump's 'reported' rhetoric by which to judge. They do not get to see the full theatrical 'global leadership show', so his conjuring is understood more literally.

And the rest of the world is only too aware of America's history of broken-words (and withdrawals from agreements).

Overseas, Trump sticks with this same strategy of presenting shock interventions, or rather, an image (Gaza, for example) of an aspirational outcome that is intended to be novel, and to evoke surprise and evenshock. The purpose seems to be to toss a psychological grenade into congealed and stultified political paradigms, hoping to find movement and intending perhaps, to trigger changed conversations.

There can be validity to such an approach, providing it does not just stick a wrench into complex geo-politics. And for Trump, this is a real danger: Advancing extreme and unrealistic notions that can simply confuse and undermine confidence that his outcome could be realistic.

The inescapable fact is that the three key foreign policy issues which Trump faces however, are not 'conversations' – they relate to existential wars; to death and destruction. And wars are not so susceptible to off-hand grenade tossing. Worse, 'careless words' fired from the hip, have real import and may produce unintended and distinctly adverse consequences.

The cease-fire between Israel and Hamas remains close to the brink of collapse, as "the magician" [Netanyahu] continues working to sabotage it; nevertheless Hamas' pressure in recent days worked, and the ceasefire (for now) continues.

Trump may have believed that by unilaterally raising the stakes (demanding publicly the release of "all" Israeli hostages this Saturday) – thereby collapsing a complex process down to just one single release – he would be able to bring more hostages home quicker. However, in so threatening, he risked the complete collapse of the deal, since the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, and the withdrawal of the IDF from Gaza in Phase Two, form the absolute bedrock to Hamas' continued participation in the negotiations.

Any resulting resumption of the Israeli destruction of Gaza would also constitute a black stain on Trump's aspiration to end wars – for he would then 'own' the consequences to a renewal of war in the Middle East.

Netanyahu's principal concern primordially lies with not completing the deal, but with the continued survival of his government. This was the meaning to his statement in reaction to Trump's 'threats' (hell let loose) that Israel would halt negotiations on Phase Two of the Gaza deal, and in Netanyahu's

echoing of Trump's demand that Hamas release "all" the hostages on Saturday – or else. The Israeli government however, duly has backtracked under pressure from Hamas – Israel, officials report, has conveyed the message to Hamas that the ceasefire will continue, should the three hostages be released this Saturday.

Whilst it is now obvious from the Trump Team's discourse that the U.S. is intent to present a new face to the coming multipolar world – "with multi-great powers in different parts of the planet", as Marco Rubio outlined in a recent interview – it is also true, however, that this change came about (was driven, in fact) by a seismic shift in how the world views America. Rubio effectively admits to this 'truth' when he adds that "the postwar global order is not just obsolete; it is now a weapon being used against us".

Some members of the Trump Team, however, persist with threats ('inflicting maximum pain', 'bombing to extinction') that hark back to the old era of U.S. imperium. That is to say, some of Trump's Team repeat Rubio's rubric well enough, but without showing any indication that they have been affected or transformed by the new understanding. The 'seismic shift' is two-way.

The World is in a new era too. It has had enough of western unlateral impositions. It is this that triggered their shift. Their swivel of 'the face that the U.S. presents to the world' – the one outlined by Rubio. Understanding that both Hegemon and its vassals have transformed demands new approaches by all sides.

When Trump signed a Presidential Order for maximum pressure on Iran, the Supreme Leader simply said "No" to all talks with the U.S. Trump was just too unpredictable and untrustworthy, Khamenei said. Kellogg's exaggerated claim that Iran 'is scared' and effectively defenceless, didn't bring the expected response of talks. It brought defiance.

The West's insensibility to what is going on in the world – and why the world is what it is – has been made possible because it was partially disguised through the ability of the U.S. – in the past era – to be able to impose itself on crises, and control the way that those problems were presented across the global narrative machine.

Trump's Ukraine Envoy Kellogg said recently that Russia's current sanctions 'pain level' is at about 3 out of 10, and that Trump has much more room to raise that 'pain level' by putting sanctions pressure on Russian oil and gas:

> "You have to put economic pressure; you have to put diplomatic pressure, some type of military pressures and levers that you're going to use underneath those to make sure [this goes] where we want it to go".

The arrogance and misreading of the Russian position in Kellogg's statement is so complete that it brought Russian Deputy FM Sergei Ryabkov to warn that Moscow-Washington relations are "teetering at the brink of complete rupture"; the 'antagonistic content' of Russian-U.S. relations has become 'very critical' today, Ryabkov cautioned:

> "Washington's attempts to give Moscow demands or to demonstrate the alleged doing of 'a great favour' in exchange for unacceptable U.S. demands are bound to end with failure in the dialogue with Russia".

This ominous signal was stated by Ryabkov, despite Russia actively wanting a strategic, big-picture, written security deal with the U.S. – albeit one achieved on equal terms.

Yves Smith at Naked Capitalism has cataloged the deep-seated Russian experience (and resentment) for the West's history of duplicity. It runs deep, and begs a question whose answer is yet to be seen: 'The elephant in the room'. Drafting a paper of

understandings on Ukraine is one thing. But Russians remain sceptical as to whether it can achieve a process that is written, binding and trustworthy.

Behind this lies a second question: Russia can see Trump searching for leverage over Moscow. But time (what Yves Smith calls “military time”) runs to a different tempo to that of “political time”. Trump wants to end the conflict, AND be seen to have ended it. The point here is that Russia’s slower military time may end with Trump falling into what Steve Bannon warned could be a deadly trap: ‘Too long, and you (Trump) will end by owning it’ (as Nixon ended up ‘owning’ Vietnam).

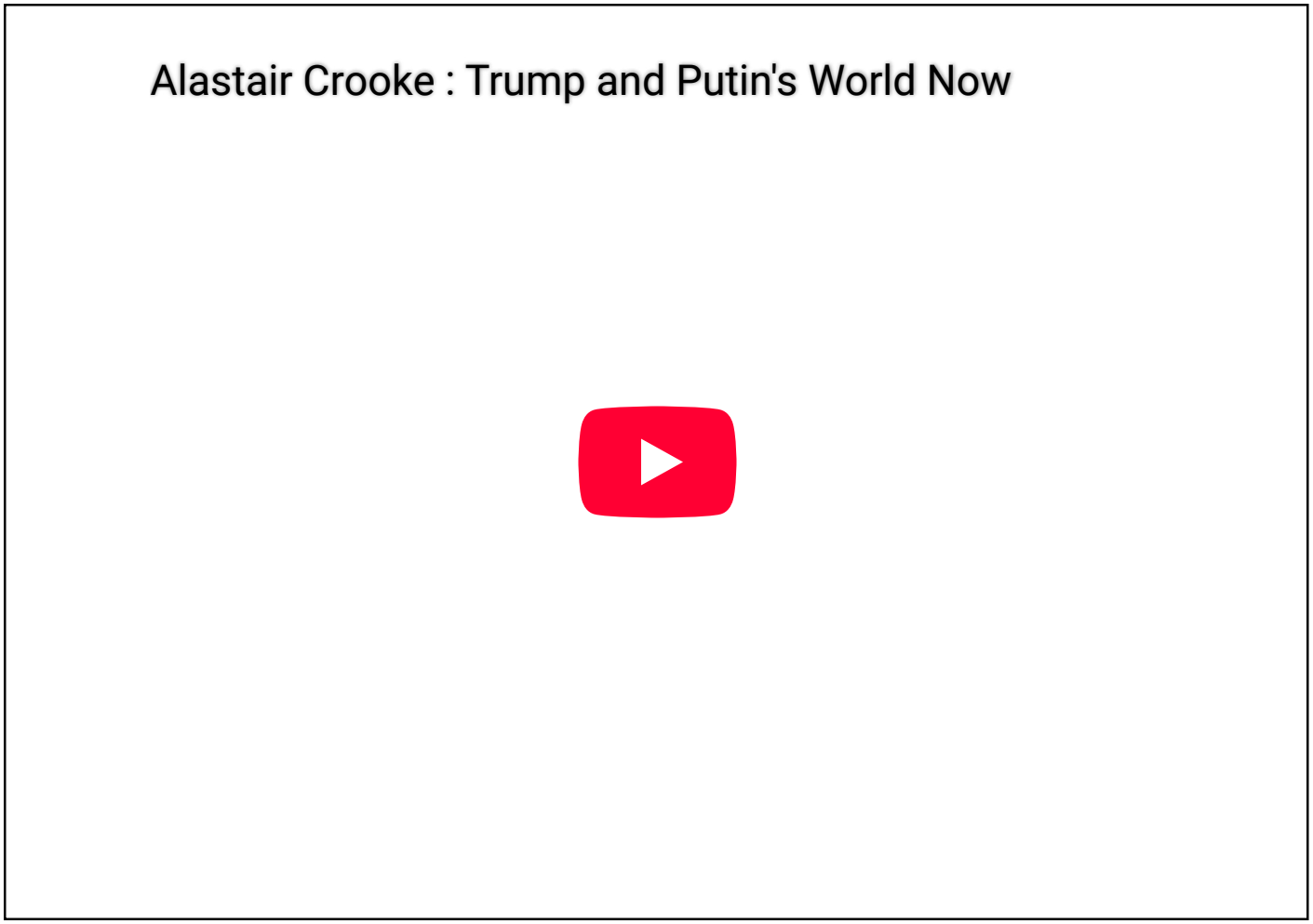
Trump Team members may, at one level, ‘understand’ the new balance of power. Yet culturally and unconsciously, they adhere to the notion that the West (and Israel) remain exceptional, and that all other actors only change behaviour through pain and overwhelming leverage.

What did emerge from the transcript of Trump’s long call with Putin was that it touched on big issues and did not at all stay captive to the Ukraine issue.

Yves Smith puts the ‘elephant in the room’ issue this way:

> “It took a full 17 years from Putin’s 2008 Munich Security Conference speech, where he called for a multipolar world order, for the U.S. to officially acknowledge, via Mark Rubio, that the U.S. unipolar period was unnatural and had ended”.

Let us hope it will not take as long for Russia to achieve a new European security architecture. As The Telegraph avers: “This is Putin and Trump’s world now”.



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